



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 27, 2004

04-36

New Driving Laws Take Effect In 2005

SACRAMENTO – The California Highway Patrol reminds motorists that several new traffic laws passed by the legislature and signed by the governor will take effect with the new year. Here are the major changes to driving regulations or vehicle equipment.

Child Restraint Laws. (AB 1697 of 2003, Torlakson). Beginning January 1, 2005, this bill requires all children under six years of age or weighing less than 60 pounds to be properly restrained in the back seat of passenger vehicles. Exceptions include vehicles with no rear seat, rear seats that are rear or side-facing, and if all rear seats are occupied by children under the age of twelve. The law also prohibits children from riding in the front seat of a vehicle with an active passenger airbag if the child is under the age of one or weighs less than 20 pounds or is riding in a rear-facing restraint system.

Motorized Scooters. (AB 1878, Chan). This new law requires users of motorized scooters to possess a valid Class C driver's license or instruction permit. Previously no license was required. The law is also amended to prohibit operating a scooter on a highway or off-highway unless it has a properly maintained muffler in constant operation. It also prohibits sale of a scooter that produces more than 80 decibels at a distance of 50 feet.

Traffic Signal Devices. (AB 340, Frommer). This prohibits unauthorized purchase, possession, manufacture, installation, sale or distribution of a MIRT or other devices capable of sending a signal that interrupts or changes the sequence patterns of an official traffic control signal. Authorized emergency vehicles and public transit vehicles are excepted.

Speed Violations. (AB 2237, Parra). This new law provides for a fine of up to \$750 for a second conviction within three years for driving in excess of 100 mph. The fine increases up to \$1,000 per conviction for subsequent offenses committed within five years of the first two.

MORE



Speed Contests. (SB 1541, Margett). Punishment for those who engage in illegal speed contests such as street racing increases to now include mandatory performance of 40 hours of community service. Preexisting penalties include 24-hours minimum jail time and suspension of driver's license for from 90 days to six months.

Wireless Telephones. (AB 2785, Nakano). This new addition to the California Vehicle Code prohibits the driver of a school bus or transit vehicle from using a wireless telephone while driving. Exemptions are for work related use or emergency purposes.

Lighting Equipment. (SB 1236, Murray). The new law permits non-distracting night vision enhancement devices which display images allowing a driver to see objects ahead better during darkness.

Headlamp Usage. (AB 1854, Simitian). This amendment to the vehicle code requires every motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle, be operated with headlamps lighted when weather conditions require the windshield wipers to be in continuous use. **[EFFECTIVE 7/1/05]**

H. O. V. Lanes. (AB 2628, Pavley). Pending federal authorization, specified single occupancy hybrid motor vehicles may use HOV lanes.

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